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PREPARATION OF THE RURAL WORLD OF AFRICA
TO MODERN AGRICULTURAL PLANNING
BY THE PILOT-CENTRES OF DIFFUSION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Preparation of the rural world of Africa to modern agricultural
planning by the pilot-centres of diffusion and development

SUMMARY :

Any attempt to modernize the rural world of black Africa cannot be conceived without a whole set of governmental interventions, such as: training of rural experts and leaders, creation of public utilities and distribution of farming equipment, creation of Experimental Stations for the improvement of farming techniques and yields, loans to farmers (Crédit National Agricole), organization of marketing and distribution facilities, etc.

However, government measures as such are not enough to start any process of farm modernization.

More than the mere improvement of farming techniques, farm modernization means first of all a good amount of forgetting old farming customs and real change in the way of living.

One knows how staunchly the African farmer (be it out of respect, ignorance or resignation) clings to his tribal customs. This fact explains the indifference, if not the hostility which he still opposes to the pressure of progress. In any case, we may say that the majority of African farmers are not ready yet, mentally speaking, for rural evolution.

Thence the imperative necessity to increase the yields of the rural collectivities for their better living and higher prosperity. Through such a forward movement they would be in a better position to " grasp" the meaning of progress, psychologically.

This is the aim of the Pilot-Centres for diffusion and development, which may be defined as " cells" of psychological and technical impregnation. The Centres are established among farming collectivities which they try to direct towards prosperity by teaching them progressive cultural methods. Theories are put into practice on the spot. In short, the Centres study the physical and human environment in order to work out more productive farming formulas, which then they demonstrate practically. They develop the farmers' sense for mutual aid and teach them how to group professionally, thus giving form to a cooperative structure; this

organization will then permit: loans for the different campaigns, commercialisation and distribution of surplus products, etc.

In short, the Pilot-Centres study and prepare for each village its own modernizing system. The influence of their work is very strong even outside the collectivities, so that a whole region can be transformed when enough centres are established there. These centres can vary in dimension and aspect and are thus adapted to different circumstances and environments.

The pilot-centres remain for the rural world of black Africa the most efficient and economic means to direct them towards modern agricultural progress.
